

President Blamed for Loss of U-2 Program

By Katherine Johnson

Washington—Bumbling and fumbling, beginning with the launching of a Lockheed U-2 espionage flight over the Soviet Union on the eve of the summit conference and ending with the "self-righteous" assumption of responsibility by the President, have absolutely ruled out any resumption of the highly successful aerial reconnaissance program, Sen. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) told the Senate last week.

Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, presented the Senate with a 30-page report on testimony taken by his committee from top government officials on events related to the summit conference (AW June 6, p. 19).

The committee report, extensively quoted to assure bi-partisan support, is an analysis of the testimony which does not draw clear cut conclusions or make recommendations. It was approved by a 14 to 1 vote. Sen. Homer Caperton (R-Ind.) voted against it "because I do not think it promotes the best interests of the U.S. and international relations." Sen. Alexander Wiley (R-Wis.) and Sen. Frank Lausche (D-Ohio) abstained. Fulbright's speech, which was worded much more strongly than the written report, was based on the factual information presented in the report.

"Short of the madness of preventive war I can think of nothing more dangerous than to resume overflights of the Soviet Union," Fulbright said. "These overflights were useful while they lasted, but they have now obviously become, as the professionals describe it, contaminated."

Those who now deplore the cancellation of these flights can lay direct blame on the assumption of responsibility by the President, according to Fulbright. "It is unprecedented among world leaders for a chief of state to assume personal responsibility for covert intelligence operations. . . . One reason intelligence agencies exist is to serve the chief of state in cases of this kind."

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most likely been more temperate in his choice of language, it is difficult to see how anyone could have been expected to act substantially different from the way Chairman [Nikita] Khrushchev acted under the circumstances which confronted him in Paris."

If a Russian counterpart of the U-2 had been downed over Kansas, Fulbright said, the incident "would have brought speeches in the Senate powerful enough to rock the Capitol dome with denunciations of the perfidy of the Soviets on the eve of the summit conference and with demands that the President not go to Paris. But then, reflect how much more violent the reaction here would have been if Mr. Khrushchev had said he was personally responsible for the flight and at the same time left the impression that he had every intention of trying it again."

Commenting that "it was bad enough" for President Eisenhower to assume responsibility, Fulbright added that "it was worse for us then to leave the impression that the flights were to be continued, and even more, to go to such lengths to justify the flights."

The need for information gives a justification for intelligence activities which any government can understand,

Fulbright said. "But it becomes quite intolerable to go beyond this and attempt to make it appear that the flights were really the Soviets' own fault; that if the Soviets had not been so secretive, we would not have had to spy on them."

He pointed to the difference between saying "we tried to get intelligence, because we needed it," and saying "we needed intelligence and this gave us the right to try to get it."

Fulbright said the argument that the President "should tell the truth" is "irrelevant." He commented that the President should be commended "for following the rigorous standards of honesty set by young George Washington. But, although Washington admitted chopping down the cherry tree, he did not go on to say, 'Yes, I did it, and I'm glad. The cherry tree was offensive to me, because it had grown so tall. I needed some cherries, and I shall chop down other cherry trees whenever I want more cherries.'"

Although the technical skill demonstrated by almost four years of U-2 flights aroused "widespread admiration," Fulbright said, the "unfortunate series of blunders" in dealing with the capture of the U-2 has resulted in a world-wide loss of confidence. He anticipated that this would lead to neutralism among U.S. allies. As indications, Fulbright pointed to the contributing factor of neutralism in Japanese riots against the U.S.-Japanese defense treaty, and the groundswell of sentiment in Mexico against establishment of a U. S. missile-tracking site on Mexican territory.

Fulbright questioned that the information sought on the May 1 flight "was in fact as important as it has been represented. There is ground here for the conclusion that the alleged extraordinary importance of this information is the Administration's cover story for its own costly mistake."

It is understood that the primary reconnaissance objective of the flight was information on the expected launching of a manned satellite on the Communist national holiday. Russia did launch the Sputnik IV dummy-in-space ship on May 15 (AW May 23, p. 27).

The Foreign Relations Committee report doubted that the flight was worth the price risked, but did not pass judgment since witnesses had refused to give information on the flight, even on a classified basis. The report did highlight the fact that no top-level authorization was given for the

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Aerospace Corp. will recruit talent from available sources from around the country to fill a variety of positions in connection with its new responsibilities in such programs as Samos, Midas, Discoverer and other military space systems in an earlier stage of development. Company may be called upon to accept contracts from government agencies other than the Air Force.

It will utilize extensive laboratory and other facilities at the El Segundo, Calif., research and development center which the Air Force is purchasing from Space Technology Laboratories. These facilities initially will be shared by Aerospace, ARDC's Ballistic Missile Division, AMC's Ballistic Missile Center and units of Space Technology Laboratories serv-